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Ms. Amy Schwartz, ed page
The Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, DC 20071

Dear Ms. Schwartz,

In your today's oped piece, the second of those two pitfalls that confront those new to Washington is one that very few can be better prepared to understand than Sheldon Hackney. He had the best of possible sources, his mother-in-law, a truly remarkable woman in every way. Virginia Durr, a dear friend of mine in the 1930s when I was a Senate editor, and her late husband, Clifford, believed as deeply and as sincerely in traditional American, founding-father beliefs as any I have met in 80 years. And both were horribly victimized for it.

Cliff was enormously important in the RFC in many ways, including in preparing for what Hitler made inevitable. On the FCC he was the father of educational radio and TV. He saw clearly what the result of advertiser control of the electronic media would mean, as those concerned about violence do not know but I believe should appreciate. And Virginia initiated and for years led the fight to repeal the poll tax.

The University of Alabama has a fine book on each. The one on Virginia, "Outside the Magic Circle," is really selections from oral histories, most as I recall Columbia University. An Australian professor (some one) wrote what I regard as an excellent and very understand NG book on Cliff, I think "The Conscience of an American Lawyer."

Virginia had a fine 90th birthday party on the Cape this summer. Many from Washington went up for it.

She was, by the way, Hugo Black's sister-in-law.

She is a truly great traditional American and I think it is wonderful that so much of what she and her husband were abused for are now national belief and policy and that she lived to enjoy the honor paid her by so many, so many of whom are prominent in our national life today.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

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